

# IMPERIAL IRRIGATION DISTRICT

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **IID Board approves historic QSA**

The Imperial Irrigation District (IID) Board of Directors late Thursday approved the Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA) developed through seven years of negotiations. The agreement authorizes the largest ever ag-to-urban water transfer while making urban money available to finance on-farm water conservation projects.

The multi-faceted agreement protects the Imperial Valley's water rights while it authorizes several water transfers between IID and participating agencies that will allow California to reduce its Colorado River water use to its 4.4 million acre-foot entitlement over a 15-year period. The agreement limits taking land out of production and relies mainly on water conservation to help meet California's changing water needs. It also sets in motion efforts to protect the Salton Sea.

After more than two hours of debate, IID Board President Lloyd Allen said, "I believe the QSA we approved here tonight gives IID, today and in the future, the best opportunity to assure our water order rather than fight the Bureau of Reclamation year in and year out."

He added, "I'd rather live with 3.1 million acre-feet a year than guess that we'll have 2.8."

Directors voted 3-2 in favor of the QSA and the related documents. Among the key provisions of the agreement is that, for the first time ever, IID agrees to cap its water use at 3.1 million acre-feet. The agreements call for transferred water to be subtracted from that cap.

IID Chief General Counsel John Penn Carter said, "From the start this deal was not about making money selling water. It is about protecting the Imperial Valley's water rights. I believe the QSA accomplishes that."

IID Director Rudy Maldonado said, "I would rather live with what we have in the QSA than risk losing more."

Of particular concern to many people in the Imperial Valley is that the transfer calls for some land to be put out of production in the early years of the transfer. Carter noted the current QSA limits fallowing and allows conservation to be started sooner.

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Kuhn, Board President Allen and Carter were on the District's team that negotiated the QSA. Board members Andy Horne and Stella Mendoza voted against the agreement.

Approval of the agreement involved adoption of a series of resolutions that allow the IID's Board President to sign the final documents along with San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA), Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) and the Metropolitan Water District (MWD). The actions taken by the Board included approval of the environmental documents, IID Water Conservation and Transfer Project, the QSA Project and the settlement of the lawsuit between the IID and the United States Department of the Interior.

"The next steps call for a formal signing of the final documents and agreements by the four agencies and the state of California," said Carter. "We will also be in contact with the Federal District Court to request the dismissal of our lawsuit against the Department of the Interior."

The formal signing is expected to take place on Thursday, October 9.

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*(QSA documents will be posted on IID's Web site later today.)*